

STATUS OF CLAIMS

1. (original) A powder food product obtained from drying a milk caramel product, the powder product containing at least a high molecular weight polysaccharide in an amount of between about 3 wt % and about 40 wt % relative to the weight of solids in the powder, and a humidity between about 1 and about 7%.

2. (original) The powder product of claim 1, wherein high molecular weight polysaccharide is selected from starch, modified starch, equivalent dextrose maltodextrin lower than 20 (DE<20), gum arabic, and combinations thereof.

3. (original) The powder product of claim 1, further comprising at least one additive selected from anti foam agents, anti-moisteners, anti-agglutinants, anti-oxidants, colorants, sweeteners, thickeners, gelatinizing agents, stabilizers, aromatizers, flavorants, moisture additives, acidity controllers, emulsion agents, emulsifiers, flavor enhancers, chemical leavening agents, consistency agents, hardeners, texture agents, sequesters, color stabilizers and foaming additives.

4. (original) The powder product of claim 1, wherein the powder product has an apparent density of between 0.1 g/ml and 0.65 g/ml, a maximum solubility index of 1.5 ml and a maximum fluidity of 120 seconds.

5. (original) A process for obtaining a powder food product based on milk caramel, the method comprising the steps of: i) cooking together at least milk and sugar until obtaining a milk caramel product having between about 30 wt % and about 60 wt % solids, ii) pasteurizing the milk caramel product at a temperature of between about 50.degree. C. and about 85.degree. C., iii) homogenizing the pasteurized milk caramel product into a mixture at a pressure between about 5 kg/cm.sup.2 and about 100 kg/cm.sup.2, iv) adding to the mixture a high molecular weight polysaccharide before, simultaneously with, or after any of the above steps, in an amount of between about 3 wt % and about 40 wt % of the total dry weight, and v) drying and agglomerating the mixture until obtaining a powder having between about 1% and about 7% moisture.

14. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the at least one additive is added to the milk caramel product during or after step i).

15. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein volatile components are given off during the process and such components are recovered and re-inserted into the mixture.

16. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein the high molecular weight polysaccharide is selected from starch, modified starch, equivalent dextrose maltodextrine lower than 20 (DE<20), gum arabic, and combinations thereof.

17. (currently amended) Use of A food product wherein the powder food product of claim 1; ~~wherein the powder product is mixed with lecithin and partially dehydrogenated fat for obtaining a cover topping for pastry and confectionery.~~

18. (currently amended) A food product wherein ~~Use of the powder food product of claim 1;~~ ~~wherein the powder product is mixed with starch, partially dehydrogenated fat and caramel colorant for obtaining a filler for pastry and confectionery.~~

19. (currently amended) A food product wherein ~~Use of the powder food product of claim 1;~~ ~~wherein the powder product is mixed with partially dehydrogenated fat and sugar for obtaining a creamy filler for pastry and confectionery.~~

20. (currently amended) A food product wherein ~~Use of the powder food product of claim 1;~~ ~~wherein the powder product is mixed with demineralized whey, partially dehydrogenated fat and sugar for obtaining a spreading paste.~~

21. (currently amended) A food product wherein ~~Use of the powder food product of claim 1;~~ ~~wherein the powder product is mixed with powder whey, powder skimmed milk, an emulsifier and sugar, for obtaining a mousse.~~

22. (currently amended) A food product wherein~~Use of the powder food product of claim 1,~~
~~wherein the powder product~~ is mixed with stabilizers, emulsifiers, powder milk, powder skimmed
milk, and sodium citrate for obtaining a milk caramel shake product.

23. (currently amended) A food product~~Use of the powder food product of claim 1,~~ wherein
water is added to the powder product of claim 1 for obtaining a reconstituted milk caramel product
with a moisture content of between about 10% and about 30%.

24. (original) A process for obtaining a powder food product from a milk caramel product
having between about 30 wt % and about 60 wt % solids, the method comprising the steps of: i)
pasteurizing the milk caramel product at a temperature of between about 50. degree. C. and about
85. degree. C., ii) homogenizing the pasteurized milk caramel product into a mixture at a pressure
between about 5 kg/cm.sup.2 and about 100 kg/cm.sup.2, iii) adding to the mixture a high molecular
weight polysaccharide before, simultaneously with, or after any of the above steps, in an amount of
between about 3 wt % and about 40 wt % of the total dry weight, and iv) drying and agglomerating
the mixture until obtaining a powder having between about 1% and about 7% moisture.